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STATEMENT OF REP. HENRY A. WAXMAN REGARDING THE RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY ON VALERIE PLAME WILSON July 14, 2005

I am pleased to cosponsor the resolution of inquiry my colleague Rep. Holt is introducing today. This resolution is essential because it would stop the stonewalling and require the Bush Administration to provide information about who revealed the identity of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame Wilson.

The disclosure of Ms. Wilson's identity was reprehensible. Revealing the identity of undercover agents jeopardizes the safety of both the agent and those associated with the agent. And doing so for political purposes is ethically and morally abhorrent.

A statement from three former CIA officials — Larry Johnson, Michael Grimaldi, and Brent Cavan — explains what is at stake:

"We ... want to send a clear message to the political 'operatives' responsible for 'outing' Mrs. Wilson. Such action was treacherous, if not treasonous. ... This has set a sickening precedent. The 'senior Administration officials' who did this have warned all U.S. intelligence officers and the Intelligence Community that any one individual may be compromised if providing information or factual analysis the White House does not like."

The events of this past week underscore the need for the resolution introduced by Mr. Holt. Evidence emerged last weekend implicating the President's top aide, Karl Rove, in the leak. Yet the White House refused to answer basic questions about the matter.

This is wrong. Given the gravity of the offense, President Bush has a responsibility to tell the American people exactly what happened and remove those responsible from their positions.

And Congress, as an independent branch of government, should exercise its oversight responsibility to hold the White House accountable for the leak and restore public trust in the White House's ability to handle sensitive information. This should not be a partisan matter. It's a national security offense that has angered Americans across the country, across party lines.

I think the senior President Bush got it right when he said, "I have nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the name of our sources. They are, in my view, the most insidious, of traitors."